

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3506



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Introduced by **HON. JORGE DANIEL S. BOCOBO**

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### EXPLANATORY NOTE

Gambling is a recreational activity engaged in by millions of people due to its appeal in potentially transforming lives, enhancing social bonds, altering mood states, or generating financial gains.<sup>1</sup> However, gambling can also become a significant public health issue that extends beyond individuals with gambling disorders.<sup>2</sup>

Problematic gambling behaviors are associated with various adverse health outcomes, including mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety, substance use, and even suicidal tendencies. Socially, gambling can lead to financial instability, relationship problems, and reduced work performance, exacerbating social inequalities in the communities and leading to broader societal costs.

The evolution of online gambling has seen significant growth in recent decades, largely driven by technological advancements and the increasing accessibility of gambling platforms. Traditionally, gambling was an occasional recreational activity conducted in person, whereas nowadays it is part of the daily life of many people, mainly due to the high availability of online gambling at any time. However, this ease and speed of access has also led to an increase in concerns about the potential harm associated with online gambling. In this regard, a recent meta-analysis confirms that online gambling is a clear risk factor for the emergence of gambling problems.

With the advent of the internet and online platforms, gambling has never been easier and more accessible to more and more people. In fact, for 2024, the electronic games sector accounted for half of the record-high revenues of the Philippine Games and Amusement Corporation for the year, surpassing the contributions from the long-standing licensed casino industry.<sup>3</sup>

Marketing strategies particularly advertising play a crucial role in influencing gambling behaviors and normalizing gambling.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, it demonstrated a substantial impact on gambling behavior, especially among vulnerable populations such as youth and problem

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<sup>1</sup> P. Binde (2012), Why people gamble: a model with five motivational dimensions. *Int Gambl Stud*, 13 (2013), pp. 81-97, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14459795.2012.712150>

<sup>2</sup> E. Langham, H. Thorne, M. Browne, P. Donaldson, J. Rose, M. Rockloff (2015), Understanding gambling related harm: a proposed definition, conceptual framework, and taxonomy of harms. *BMC Public Health*, 16 (2016), pp. 80-103, <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-016-27470#~:text=The%20current%20paper%20proposes%20a%20definition%20and%20conceptual,the%20development%20of%20more%20appropriate%20measures%20of%20harm>

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.pagcor.ph/press-releases/pagcor-revenues-hit-new-record-high-of-php112-billion-in-2024>.

<sup>4</sup> H. Wardle, G. Reith, D. Best, D. McDaid, S. Platt (2017), Measuring gambling-related harms: a framework for action Gambling Commission (2018), *McDaid\_Gambling-Related\_harms\_Published.pdf*

gamblers. Exposure to various advertising strategies, such as betting promotions during sports broadcasts, can foster gambling intentions and contribute to the normalization of gambling.

Despite the recent signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation and the Ad Standards Council (ASC) on July 16, 2025 for the regulation and pre-screening of gambling-related advertisements across all media platforms, patrons of online gambling will always know where to look due to the ease of accessibility afforded by the internet.

Under the said MoU, gambling is now included in the ASC's list of "must-screen" categories – joining alcoholic beverages, over-the-counter medicines, food supplements, airline/transport services with promotional fares, and breast milk substitutes.

Under the document, all branded or corporate gambling ads – including television, radio, online and outdoor advertising – must be reviewed and approved by ASC prior to public release to curb misleading content and protect vulnerable groups from potential harm.

However, this representation strongly believes that the same regulation adopted for tobacco must be applied to online gambling. Concretely, Republic Act No. 9211, otherwise known as the Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003, was enacted. Under this measure, while tobacco was not banned, all forms of tobacco advertising in mass media were prohibited except at the point of sale. The State would be wise to do the same for online gambling.

At the end of the day, it is our moral obligation to prevent the disintegration of our values as a people. More importantly, it is our duty as God-fearing people to raise future generations in a morally upright environment, and to protect them from the evils and dangers of not only gambling and greed, but also the proliferation of messaging that inevitably downplays such dangers and promotes its consumption.

For these reasons, the swift and immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.

  
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**AN ACT**  
**PROHIBITING ALL FORMS OF ADVERTISING OF ONLINE GAMBLING**

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

**SECTION 1. Title.** – This Act shall be known as the "Anti-Online Gambling Advertisement Act of 2025."

**SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is the policy of the State to promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation. It is also the policy of the State, consistent with the Constitutional ideal to promote the general welfare, to safeguard the interests of the people.

For these purposes, the State shall institute a balanced policy whereby the advertisement of online gambling shall be regulated in order to promote a healthful environment and protect the citizens, especially the youth, from the hazards of gambling, and at the same time ensure that the interests of workers and stakeholders in the gambling industry are not adversely compromised.

**SECTION 3. Definition of Terms.** – For purposes of this Act, the following terms are hereby defined as follows:

- (a) "Advertisement" refers to any visual and/or audible message disseminated to the public about or on a particular product or service that promote or give publicity by words, designs, images or any other means through broadcast, electronic, print or whatever form of mass media, including outdoor advertisements, such as but not limited to signs and billboards. For the purposes of this act, advertisement shall be understood as online gambling advertisement.
- (b) "Advertising" refers to the business and/or act of conceptualizing, presenting, making available and communicating to the public, through any form of mass media, any fact, data or information about the attributes, features, quality or availability of consumer products, services or credit.
- (c) For purposes of this Act, advertising shall be understood as online gambling advertising. This shall specifically refer to any messages or images marketing or promoting, or tending to market or promote, online gambling; the use of online gambling sites and platforms; and online gambling-related trademarks, brand names, designs and service provider's names.

- (d) "Advertiser" refers to any person or entity on whose account or for whom an advertisement is prepared and disseminated by the advertising agency, which is a service established and operated for the purpose of counseling or creating and producing and/or implementing advertising programs in various forms of media.
- (e) "Internet" refers to an international computer network of interoperable packet switch data networks. It includes the electronic medium in which online communications take place.
- (f) "Marketing" or "promoting" refer to any activity, program, or incentive, or any combination thereof, which give publicity to, or otherwise entice people to register and/or play.
- (g) For purposes of this Act, marketing and promoting shall include:
  - (h) Placing by any manufacturer, distributor, or retailer of any online-gambling related trademarks, brand names, and designs as a prop in any television program or motion picture produced for viewing by the general public or in a video, optical disc, or on a video game machine;
  - (i) Distributing, selling or offering, directly or indirectly, merchandise, such as but not limited to t-shirts, caps, sweatshirts, visors, backpacks, sunglasses, writing implements and umbrellas, with the trademark, brand name or design of an online gambling product, platform, or service displayed so as to be visible to others when worn or used; and
  - (j) Entering into any agreement for the naming rights of any stadium or arena using a trademark, brand name or design of an online gambling product, platform or service or otherwise causing a stadium or arena to be named with such brand name.
  - (k) "Mass media" refers to any medium of communication designed to reach a mass of people. For this purpose, mass media includes print media, such as but not limited to newspapers, magazines, and publications; broadcast media, such as but not limited to radio, television, cable television, and cinema; electronic media, such as but not limited to the internet; and social media or social media platforms on the internet.
  - (l) "Online gambling" refers to placing, receiving, or otherwise knowingly transmitting a bet or wager by any means which involves the use, at least in part, of the internet.

**SECTION 4. Ban on Advertising, Marketing or Promoting Online Gambling.** – Upon the effectivity of this Act, except as otherwise provided in this Act, all forms of advertising, marketing or promoting online gambling in mass media shall be prohibited.

**SECTION 5. Advertisements allowed on registered domains or uniform resource locators of service providers and approved online gaming platforms.** – Licensees, operators, and service providers of duly approved and authorized online gambling platforms or services may be allowed to advertise, market, or promote their own platform or service, subject to the following qualifications:

- (a) The prior approval of the Philippine Games and Amusement Corporation (PAGCOR) shall be required for all instances of advertising, marketing, or promoting under this provision.

For this purpose, the applying licensee, operator or service provider shall submit to PAGCOR the complete mechanics or the implementing rules and guidelines of the advertisement or marketing or promotional activity.

- (b) All advertisements or marketing or promotional activities shall contain a clear, categorical, and readily visible statement that persons under twenty-one (21) years of age are prohibited from participating in any form or manner in online gambling;
- (c) All advertisements or marketing or promotional activities shall not, directly or indirectly, imply that a player's skill can influence the outcome of an online gambling activity;
- (d) All advertisements or marketing or promotional activities shall not, directly or indirectly, give an impression that gambling is an accepted way to make or earn money;
- (e) All advertisements or marketing or promotional activities shall not, directly or indirectly, include misleading statements about odds and prizes, including but not limited to implication of guaranteed prizes.

**SECTION 6. Ban on Sponsorships.** – Licensees, operators, and service providers of online gambling platforms and services are prohibited from sponsoring any sport, concert, cultural or art event, as well as individual and team athletes, artists, or performers where such sponsorship shall require or involve the advertisement, marketing or promotion of any online gambling platform or service.

**SECTION 7. Penal Provisions.** – Any person who shall advertise, market, or promote online gambling in mass media in violation of the provisions of this Act shall be punished by imprisonment ranging from one (1) year to six (6) years or a fine of not less than One Million Philippine Pesos (PHP 1,000,000.00) nor more than Five Million Philippine Pesos (PHP 5,000,000.00), at the discretion of the court.

If the offender is a corporation or association, the maximum penalty of five (5) years and a fine of Five Million Philippine Pesos (PHP 5,000,000.00) shall be imposed upon the President, Directors, Managers, or Managing Partners thereof.

If the offender is a public officer or employee, the maximum penalty prescribed for the offense shall be imposed. In addition, such public officer or employee shall be dismissed from public service and perpetually disqualified from holding any public office and participating in any election.

**SECTION 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within thirty (30) days following the approval of this Act, the Department of Interior and Local Government and the Department of Justice, in coordination with the Philippine Games and Amusement Corporation, shall jointly promulgate the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this measure.

**SECTION 9. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with any provision of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, superseded, or amended accordingly.

**SECTION 10. Separability Clause.** – If any provision of this Act or the application of such provision to any person or circumstance is held invalid for any reason, the remainder of this Act or the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

**SECTION 11. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation, whichever comes earlier.

*Approved,*